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Chairman: Mr. Kmoníček ..... (Czech Republic)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kuznetsov

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The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Agenda item 165: Financing of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (*continued*) (A/58/744, A/58/792 and A/58/798)

1. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the budget for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 (A/58/744), recalled that the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) had been established by Security Council resolution 1509 (2003) of 19 September 2003. The budget for the Mission for the period from 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 amounted to $839.6 million, which represented an increase of $275.1 million, or 48.7 per cent, over the appropriation for the financial period ending 30 June 2004. The additional requirements resulted from the full deployment of military contingents and international staff over the 12 months of the budget period, compared with a phased deployment over 9 months, adjusted by a 35 per cent delayed deployment factor for military contingents and a 50 per cent vacancy factor for international staff, in the 2003/04 period.

2. Since the issuance of the report, the budget estimates had been revised. Additional requirements for the electoral programme were offset by a reduction in the provision for troop-rotation travel, resulting in a net decrease in the overall requirements for UNMIL for 2004/05. Those changes were reflected in the related report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/58/798). The action to be taken by the General Assembly was described in paragraph 27 of the Secretary-General's report.

3. Turning to the note by the Secretary-General on the financing arrangements for the United Nations Mission in Liberia for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/792), she recalled that the General Assembly, by its resolution 58/261, had appropriated an amount of $564.5 million to the Special Account for UNMIL and apportioned $450 million among Member States for the current period. As at 30 March 2004, expenditures incurred by UNMIL had amounted to $237.8 million. Based on the projected requirements for the period April-June 2004, estimated at $326.7 million, it was anticipated that the Mission would fully utilize the appropriation provided for its maintenance for 2003/04. The projected full utilization of resources was mainly attributable to the pace of troop deployment, which had been faster than budgeted. Consequently, additional amounts needed to be obligated to cover liabilities for standard troop cost reimbursement, contingent-owned equipment and self-sustainment. The General Assembly was therefore requested, in paragraph 4 of the note, to apportion among Member States the additional amount of $114.5 million for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004.

4. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/58/798), said that, while the Secretary-General had requested $834.2 million for UNMIL for 2004/05, the Advisory Committee recommended an amount of $822 million, a reduction of $12.2 million. Concerning budget performance for the current period, the Advisory Committee pointed out in paragraph 8 of its report that, in order to reach the level of expenditure projected, the Mission would have to spend about $326 million in three months, April-June 2004, compared with expenditure of around $239 million during the previous eight months, from 1 August 2003 to 31 March 2004. In that connection, he noted that information on unliquidated obligations had not been available to the Advisory Committee.

5. With regard to the proposed budget for 2004/05, the Mission was to be commended for the progress made in formulating its budget document using results-based techniques, although further improvements could be made in a number of areas. For example, the linkage between proposed resources and programmed outputs and accomplishments could be better defined, and identification of external factors could be further enhanced.

6. The Advisory Committee welcomed the information on mechanisms for effective collaboration and coordination with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes but considered that more could be done in that regard.

7. Concerning military and police personnel, the Advisory Committee was concerned that, as at the beginning of May 2004, only 3 troop-contributing countries out of 20 represented in the Mission had signed memorandums of understanding and that pre-

deployment inspections had been conducted in only 5 troop-contributing countries. It requested that urgent measures should be taken to remedy that situation.

8. With regard to civilian personnel, the Advisory Committee was of the view that further efforts should be made to streamline the organizational structure of the Mission in the context of the comprehensive review planned for mid-2004. In that connection, it pointed out that its previous concern about the numerous small sections and units in UNMIL still needed to be taken into account. It intended to monitor developments in the reform of the organizational structure of the Mission, including top-level positions.

9. The Advisory Committee recommended a modest upward adjustment of the delayed deployment rates for military observers and civilian police and an increase in the vacancy rates for international staff, National Professional Officers, national General Service staff and United Nations Volunteers. It further recommended approval of the staffing proposals for UNMIL, noting that additional personnel for the electoral programme would be hired in a staggered manner during the preparation for and holding of the elections and would be released in a similar staggered manner as the need for electoral support diminished.

10. Under operational costs, the Advisory Committee recommended a reduction in the provisions for consultants and official travel in view of the absence of sufficiently detailed justification.

11. In a separate note (A/58/792), the Secretary-General had requested the assessment of an additional amount of $114.5 million for UNMIL for the period from 1 August 2003 to 30 June 2004, representing the balance of the amount appropriated by the General Assembly in its resolution 58/261. It seemed fortuitous that the total requirements projected for UNMIL exactly matched the total level of the appropriation for 2003/04. In that connection, the Advisory Committee reiterated the view, which it had expressed several times in the past, that increasing the level of assessment was not a solution to the problem of unpaid contributions.

12. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, noted that UNMIL had been established only eight months earlier and that the report before the Committee (A/58/744) contained the first budget estimates for the Mission to cover a 12-month period. The Group therefore joined the Advisory Committee in commending the Mission on the formulation of the budget document.

13. The rapid establishment of the Mission's presence on the ground and the close cooperation with the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and United Nations agencies in the field had contributed to the amelioration of the situation in Liberia, and the Group looked forward to further improvement as UNMIL completed its deployment. In order to sustain that momentum, the Mission would require continued support. The Group therefore wished to recommend that the balance of the amount appropriated by the General Assembly for the Mission for 2003/04 should be apportioned among Member States.

14. The Secretary-General had submitted a revised budget for the Mission for 2004/05 of $834.2 million. The Group had taken note of the relevant recommendations of ACABQ and was ready to discuss them further in informal consultations.

15. In the light of the interlinked nature of the conflicts in West Africa, the Group welcomed the establishment in UNMIL of mechanisms for effective collaboration and coordination with other United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as with regional and international partners. The Mission should build on those efforts with a view to achieving a settlement in Liberia that would further peace, stability and development in the region.

16. The Group had previously stressed the importance of grouping together similar activities and functions within UNMIL. It was therefore encouraged to note that, following an initial review, proposals had been made for the streamlining of the Mission's organizational structure, and it looked forward to the outcome of the comprehensive review to be carried out in mid-2004.

17. High vacancy rates could hinder the effective implementation of the Mission's mandate. Every effort should therefore be made to expedite recruitment. While the Advisory Committee had recommended the increase of the vacancy rates on which the budget estimates were based, the Secretariat should nevertheless seek to achieve full deployment of posts.

18. The Group joined the Advisory Committee in cautioning that the reduction in the unit cost of rations should not adversely affect the quality of food. Concerning the reduction in the resource requirements

for consultants and official travel proposed in paragraphs 28 and 30 of the Advisory Committee's report (A/58/798), it would appreciate receiving in informal consultations an explanation of the likely impact on the smooth functioning of the Mission.

19. The Group welcomed the implementation of quick-impact projects and called for the concept to be further strengthened. Although actual expenditures of $183,100, as at 31 March 2004, against an appropriation of $1 million appeared to reflect a moderate pace of project implementation, the Group was encouraged to note that the Mission projected full utilization of all budgeted funds for the projects.

Agenda item 138: Financing of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (*continued*) (A/58/772 and A/58/794)

20. **Ms. Pollard** (Director of the Peacekeeping Financing Division), introducing the note by the Secretary-General on the financing arrangements for the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 (A/58/772), recalled that the General Assembly, by its resolution 57/335, had appropriated and apportioned among Member States an amount of $608.2 million, including $582 million for the maintenance of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004, $20.1 million for the support account for peacekeeping operations and $6.1 million for the United Nations Logistics Base at Brindisi. Subsequently, the Assembly, by its resolution 58/259, had appropriated an additional $59 million for the maintenance of MONUC for the same period. Based on the recommendation of ACABQ, that amount had not been apportioned among Member States.

21. As at 31 March 2004, expenditures incurred by the Mission had totalled $515.6 million, or 80 per cent of the appropriation. Based on the projected requirements for the period April-June 2004, estimated at $125.4 million, it was anticipated that the Mission would fully utilize the appropriation provided for its maintenance for 2003/04. The projected full utilization of resources was mainly attributable to the full deployment of military contingents and resulting requirements for the reimbursement of troop-contributing Governments for troop costs, contingent-owned equipment and self-sustainment. The General Assembly was therefore requested, in paragraph 5 of the note, to apportion among Member States the amount of $59 million for the period from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 and to set off against the apportionment among Member States their respective shares in the Tax Equalization Fund of the estimated additional staff assessment income.

22. **Mr. Kuznetsov** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of ACABQ (A/58/794), said that the Advisory Committee recommended in paragraph 3 that the amount of $59 million should be assessed and apportioned among Member States.

23. **Ms. Udo** (Nigeria), speaking on behalf of the African Group, said that the Group welcomed the full deployment of military contingents, which had produced positive results on the ground. Given the onerous tasks lying ahead, the Group supported the Secretary-General's request to apportion among Member States the balance of the approved resources, which would be required to ensure the continued success of the Mission.

The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.